



Animal Scales at County Fairs

BUREAU OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

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RESOURCES

More information on applicable Wisconsin laws can be found at these links:

Wis. Stat. 98

<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/98>

Wis. Admin. Code ATCP 92

docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/atcp/090/92

Licensed Service Company Listing

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

County fairs that use animal scales to determine animal size or sales weight must use commercial scales. In order to obtain accurate weights and to be in compliance with the law, the following requirements for commercial scales must be met.

Selecting and using the right scale

Before using a scale, ensure all of the following:

- The scale is legal for trade
 - Scales brought into the state after January 1, 1997, must have a National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) Certificate of Conformance. This ensures that the scale meets the requirements of NIST Handbook 44. You can check for NTEP Certificates of Conformance here: <http://www.ncwm.net/certificates>
 - Scales brought into the state on or before January 1, 1997, must have been designed for commercial use by the manufacturer to be legal for trade.
- The scale meets all of the requirements of Wisconsin weights and measures laws
- The scale is suitable for its intended use, including the size of the animal to be weighed

Contact a licensed Wisconsin Weights and Measures service company to help select a suitable scale. County fair animal scales must be installed and serviced by a Wisconsin licensed service company. Scales should also be tested by a service company immediately prior to use.

Licensed service companies are listed on our website:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/WeightsMeasuresServiceCompanyListing.pdf>

Maintaining the scale

Scales need to be maintained while they are used at the fair. Plan to have a designated person who is responsible for maintaining the scale in proper operating condition. Discontinue use and contact your service company if you observe abnormal operation of the scale.

- Make sure the scale is at zero before each weighing. Scales that do not return to zero cause incorrect weights.
- Clear out the debris from animals that collects on the scale platform and underneath the scale. Debris can obstruct the weighing elements of the scale and cause inaccurate weighing.
- Look at the scale and make sure it is not binding or rubbing on anything, including the scale frame.
- Ensure the scale remains level.

Moving the scale

Animal scales are sensitive instruments and care needs to be taken when transporting them. Scales that are not designed to be portable can only be moved by a service company. Scales that are designed to be portable can be moved by the owner, following these instructions:

- Be familiar with and follow appropriate instructions for moving a portable scale—dragging and bouncing a scale can easily result in incorrect weighing.
- Carefully place the scale on a smooth, hard, stable surface.
- Place the scale so that nothing is binding or rubbing the scale platform.
- Ensure the scale is level before use. A scale that is not level can easily weigh incorrectly.
 - If the scale includes a built-in level, use it to level the scale.
 - If the scale does not have a built-in level, use a hand-held level to check and adjust the scale.
- Ensure that the scale starts and returns to zero after each weighing.

If you have any questions about animal scales or Wisconsin weights and measures law, please contact Stephen Peter at (608) 224-4954, or Stephen.Peter@wisconsin.gov.